

PSITTACINE WORKSHOP

A workshop on methodology in psittacine conservation will be conducted during the 1992 meeting of the Society of Caribbean Ornithology. The workshop will be held in the Caribbean National Forest, home of the endangered Puerto Rican Parrot (*Amazona vittata*), and will consist of the following:

Day 1, Morning [August 4].—ESTIMATING PSITTACINE POPULATIONS

1. Opening and Welcoming Remarks
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Field Supervisor
Caribbean National Forest District Ranger
2. Psittacine Census Methodology
(F.J. Vilella and J.M. Meyers)
 - a. Lowland areas (Meyers)
 - b. Montane areas (Vilella)
 - c. Ground level (Meyers)
 - d. Canopy level (Vilella)
 - e. Roost counts (Meyers)
 - f. Some possible differences between counting parrots and parakeets (Vilella and Meyers)

Day 1, Afternoon.—HABITAT MANAGEMENT

1. Management Support Structures
 - a. Observation blinds
 - b. General principles of climbing safety and equipment
 - c. Observation platforms (canopy level)
2. Cavity Improvement
 - a. Cavity surveys
 - b. Cavity evaluation
 - c. Cavity improvement

Day 2, Morning [August 5].—PSITTACINE VETERINARY MEDICINE (A.B. Arnizaut, D.V.M., and J. Torres, D.V.M.)

Topics to be announced

PUBLIC EDUCATION (Paul Butler)

CLOSING REMARKS (Workshop scheduled to end by noon)

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT OF THE 1992 MEETING OF THE COLUMBID WORKING GROUP

Frank F. Rivera—Milan
Scientific Research Area
Terrestrial Ecology Section
Department of Natural Resources
Apartado 5887, Puerta de Tierra
Puerta de Tierra, Puerto Rico 00906

The 1992 meeting of the Working Group was held August 6, 1991, in St. Lucia. Frank F. Rivera—Milan was "elected" as Chairman of the Working Group. The following people were present at the meeting: Thomas Bancroft, Joanna Burger, Alexander Cruz, Michael Gochfeld, Simone Guerrero, Catherine Levy, Frank Rivera, Alexander Sprunt, and Jim Wiley.

The main theme discussed at the meeting was the Special

Columbid Working Group Report (continued)

Symposium on Columbids to be held during 1993, probably in Cuba. The consensus reached by the members was the following:

1. The Symposium should be held at least two days before the beginning of the 1993 meeting of the Society of Caribbean Ornithology.
2. The presentations should include columbids in the Caribbean region (i.e., as delineated by David Lack, 1976. *Island Biology*; and James Bond, 1983. *Birds of the West Indies*).
3. If possible, the presentations will cover the following topics:
 - a. Status, distribution, and abundance
 - b. Habitat use
 - c. Foraging and nesting ecology
 - d. Behavioral studies
 - e. Banding and telemetry studies
 - f. Taxonomy and ecomorphology
 - g. Captive breeding
 - h. Hunting statistics and regulation
 - i. Conservation biology

4. The members of the Working Group will contact agencies, universities, and local groups to encourage the participation of people doing research in the Caribbean region.
5. The members of the Working Group will contact the Chairman as soon as possible (say, early 1992) to help in the integration of all the available information.
6. The announcement of the Symposium (and the information received) will be published in newsletters, such as "El Pitirre" early in 1992.
7. The Symposium agenda should be announced early in 1993 together with the agenda for the 1993 annual meeting of the Society of Caribbean Ornithology.

Membership

A list of 41 active Working Group members was produced.

Problems and Constraints

Ann M. Haynes-Sutton (1991 Chairperson) correctly identified the major problem faced by the Columbids Working Group when she wrote that "The Columbids Working Group itself seems to lack focus. There seems to be general agreement that everyone would like to know more, but the specific issues which need to be addressed have not been identified."

The two most important human-induced environmental problems affecting columbids in the Caribbean region are (1) habitat loss and deterioration, and (2) legal and illegal hunting.

As a first step, the Working Group can initiate efforts to standardize counts of columbids in several of the Caribbean islands (using the sampling scheme developed in Puerto Rico by the Department of Natural Resources as an example). These basic data, although not without technical problems, are probably the most cost-effective sampling alternative for the long-term study of columbid populations over broad spatial scales, such as life zones. This first step, however, is an expensive one. Hence, the first issue that we must address is related to funding. As a Working Group, we must identify and

contact adequate funding sources. (Ideas for proposals are welcome!). For example, PARTNERS IN FLIGHT and the United States Bureau of Land Management might provide partial funding, especially if we are willing to include non-game migratory birds in this sampling scheme.

There is a need to conduct intensive and extensive long-term studies in the Caribbean. Therefore, we must provide training opportunities for the interested amateurs of the different islands. It is good to know, for example, that the Gosse Bird Club of Jamaica conducted a Christmas Bird Count in 1990. Indeed, the exercise can be repeated during different seasons and years on the same (and perhaps new) counting areas, especially (although not necessarily) if the same interested volunteers are available. Of course, all these efforts will be more productive if a standard sampling scheme is developed, and the counts are conducted by trained personnel. The data, then, could be used to generate sound management and research recommendations. These data, of course, can be made available to interested investigators, for example, in the study of long-term population trends in the different islands, or the Caribbean as a whole.

Funding is our first priority. But we must write the correct words to the right people.

Thank you for your attention. Please contact me as soon as possible.

DRAFT OF SOCIETY'S CONSTITUTION TO BE SENT TO MEMBERS

A draft of the Constitution for the Society of Caribbean Ornithology was completed by the Executive Committee during a meeting in San Juan, Puerto Rico, 28-29 February 1992. The draft Constitution will be mailed to Society members along with the 1992 Annual Meeting package. Members are urged to respond by signed mail ballot to Dr. Alexander Cruz by 15 May 1992.

ALLAN KEITH STEPS DOWN AS SOCIETY'S TREASURER

Allan Keith has reluctantly left the position of Treasurer for the Society of Caribbean Ornithology, citing the need to attend to many other commitments and the demands of his professional career. Allan provided the Society with four years of outstanding service, and he will be missed.

Dr. Rosemarie Gnam has accepted the position as interim Treasurer until the summer of 1993.

NEWS OF MEMBERS

As of 1 April 1992, Dr. Kelly Brock will begin a curatorial internship at the National Zoo in Washington, D.C. Her new address is:

Department of Mammals
National Zoological Park
Washington, D.C. 20008

Ms. Lourdes Mugica Valdes, of the Department of Biology, Universidad de La Habana, Cuba, is working on her Master of Science degree at Simon Fraser University. Lourdes expects to complete her degree in 1993. Until then, she can be contacted at:

Department of Biological Sciences
Simon Fraser University
Burnaby, British Columbia V5A 1S6

Dr. José A. Ottenwalder has received his doctoral degree from the University of Florida, Gainesville. Congratulations José!

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

The Puerto Rican Parrot Field Office of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is requesting volunteers to provide assistance from June through August 1992. The project is in the rain forests of eastern Puerto Rico. The field work will require working long hours (16—18 hours maximum) in wet, steep, and hazardous terrain. Ability to work with minimum supervision is required.

Primary responsibilities include: monitoring Puerto Rican Parrot (*Amazona vittata*) reproductive activity from observation blinds, monitoring parrot activities and movements from lookout platforms in the canopy of the rain forest, collecting wild foods for the captive parrot population, and providing assistance at the Field Office aviary, where the captive flock of Puerto Rican Parrots is housed. At the aviary, volunteers will assist in the construction of nest boxes, preparation of parrot breeding cages, preparation of food for the captives, and general aviary maintenance.

Airfare, transportation, lodging, and a small weekly stipend will be provided by the Field Office. Volunteers with previous tropical experience will be considered as first choice. Ability to minimally communicate in Spanish, as well as basic knowledge of avian biology and animal behavior, are required. Applicants should send a resumé and two letters of recommendation to:

Dr. Francisco J. Vilella
Field Coordinator
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Puerto Rican Parrot Field Office
P.O. Box 488
Palmer, Puerto Rico 00721

REQUEST FOR ASSISTANCE

PEWEES IN THE CARIBBEAN. Many thanks to several members for study copies of their photographs or tapes of *Contopus caribaeus*. I would now greatly appreciate receiving close-up photos or tape recordings of calls or songs, particularly Dawn Songs, of the Lesser Antillean Pewee (*C. latirostris*), especially from St. Lucia. I will be glad to pay for them, or for tape, film, or postage costs.

George B. Reynard
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Riverton, NJ 08077